



Embassy of the United States of America Kolonia

Public Affairs Section
P.O. Box 1286
Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941
Telephone: (691) 320-2187
Fax: (691) 320-2186
Email: usembassy@mail.fm

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U.S. NAVY TEAM CLEARS YAP HARBOR OF DANGEROUS MINE

Yap, Micronesia (March 5, 2008) - A six-person United States Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team from Guam safely detonated a World War II era naval mine late in Yap on March 4. A marine biologist residing in Yap had discovered the suspicious object while diving. The horned device was moored at a depth of 110 feet below sea level at the mouth of the Waneday channel leading into Colonia Harbor. After locating and identifying the mine as a threat to divers and marine navigation, the United States Embassy coordinated with Director of the FSM Office of Environment and Emergency Management Andrew Yatilman, Yap State Government officials, and the Commander, United States Naval Forces Marianas to dispatch the EOD Team.

A U.S. military C-40 aircraft landed in Yap on March 3, bringing the six Navy ordnance disposal experts, their diving equipment, and explosives and other materials needed for the job. They met with a Yap State task force convened by Governor Sebastian Anefal to address the emergency, then proceeded to the mine's location for an onsite inspection. Yap State media issued a series of public announcements strictly prohibiting all diving activities in the immediate and surrounding areas.

On the basis of the EOD Team's assessments and public safety and environmental considerations, Governor Anefal gave the order for detonation.

Although a large crowd of spectators gathered near Colonia Harbor in anticipation of an explosion, the depth of the device, combined with the specialized expertise and careful operations of the Navy divers, resulted in a detonation marked by nothing more than a little surface turbulence. Mr. Larry Raigetal, Director of the Yap Department of Youth and Civic Affairs, commented afterward: "Everyone is just happy to have this hazard out of the way." Mr. Raigetal's staff is now working on a public education campaign using Yap radio and television broadcast media to alert the public to the continuing danger posed by unexploded ordnance.



The above information is provided as a public service by the United States Embassy.



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